



SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

In July 2000, the United States Judicial Conference authorized new district court judgeship positions for the Southern District of California. The Judicial Conference authorized five permanent judgeships and three temporary judgeships. The Southern District received the highest number of new authorized judgeships based on our status as the busiest court in the nation in terms of felony cases filed per judgeship and total weighted caseload. As of September 30, 1999, the Southern District had a weighted caseload of 1,029 cases filed per judge, far above the national average of 430 weighted filings per judge. The court is hopeful that Congress will pass a bill approving additional judgeships this term.

Due to our high volume of criminal cases and unique security needs, the court also needs the expansion of San Diego's federal courthouse to timely proceed forward. Our busy court and the United States Marshal's office are in need of expanded facilities. As an example, on July 24, 2000, the Marshal's office transported 375 prisoners to the courthouse. The holding cells, however, are designed to hold a maximum of only 160 to 170 inmates. This shortage of space presents security

concerns to the court and the public. As a result of our increased caseload, a spokesperson for the Marshal's office recently was quoted as saying, "We have been overwhelmed." According to a recent newspaper article, 45 deputies are assigned to the district in San Diego. This is one position less than existed in 1994. Six years ago, the agents had to handle 19,400 prisoner transports - last year, they carried out 45,600 prisoner transports. Through their extreme loyalty, dedication, and hard work, the courthouse has remained secure.

Congress has also recognized the need of our court for expanded facilities. In fiscal year 1999, Congress approved funding to purchase the site for the new courthouse in San Diego. The General Services Administration, after careful study of the court's needs, has identified adjacent property for additional courthouse space.

The acquisition of the adjacent site is the most efficient and economical means of meeting the court's and the public's needs. Acquisition of the adjacent site will allow the court to continue to use (1) the existing courthouse; (2) the Metropolitan Correctional Center, which is adjacent to the current courthouse and the site for expansion and includes an underground tunnel for the transportation of prisoners which also will continue to be used; and (3) a renovated jail facility across the street which will house approximately 600 additional prisoners. These advantages will result in savings to taxpayers.

Additionally, because of our overflow of criminal cases, inmates are being housed in several locations outside of San Diego county because there is no more jail space available. The opportunity to continue to use the renovated jail facility across the street will result in further savings due to decreased costs of transporting inmates to court and defense attorney payments. The United States Marshal's office is in the process of relocating several pretrial detainees from facilities outside San Diego county to the upgraded facility.

The General Services Administration has asked the court to comment on the expansion project, including whether to preserve a structure on the expansion site. The court believes that a decision on preservation is premature at this time. The matter is a design issue which may be addressed when the court receives Congressional funding for design in fiscal year 2002. Nevertheless, the Southern District is proud of its status as a pioneer and leader in historic restoration of federal structures, as witnessed by the preservation of the Jacob Weinberger United States Courthouse, which currently houses the district's bankruptcy courts. The needs of a bankruptcy court differ significantly, however, from the needs of our district court which handles a high volume of serious criminal matters. While the court is sensitive to historical considerations, the security and operational concerns continue to be of the utmost importance.